THE THEOSOPHICAL
FORUM

ISSUED BY DIRECTION AND UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IN AMERICA.

VOL. 5. APRIL, 1900 No. 12

HELENA PETROVNA BLAVATSKY.

" I understand, Socrates. It is because you say
" that you always have a divine sign. So he is
" prosecuting you for introducing new things into
" religion. And he is going into court knowing
" that such matters are easily misrepresented to
" the multitude, and consequently meaning to
" slander you there." *Plato.*

I first met dear old 'H. P. B.', as she made all her friends call her, in the spring of 1887. Some of her disciples had taken a pretty house in Norwood, where the huge glass nave and twin towers of the Crystal Palace glint above a labyrinth of streets and terraces. London was at its grimy best. The squares and gardens were scented with grape-clusters of lilac, and yellow rain of laburnums under soft green leaves. The eternal smoke pall was thinned to a gray veil shining in the afternoon sun, with the great Westminster Towers and a thousand spires and chimneys piercing through. Every house had its smoke-wreath, trailing away to the east.

H. P. B. was just finishing her day's work, so I passed a half-hour upstairs with her volunteer secretary, a disciple who served her with boundless devotion, giving up everything for her cause, and fighting her battles bravely, to be bullied in return unremittingly for seven years. I had known him two years before, in the days of Mohini Chatterji, the velvet-robed Brahman with glossy tresses and dusky face and big luminous eyes. So we talked of old times, and of H. P. B.'s great book, the *Secret Doctrine,* and he read me resonant

stanzas about Universal Cosmic Night, when Time was not; about the Luminous Sons of Manvantaric Dawn; and the Armies of the Voice; about the Water Men Terrible and Bad, and the Black Magicians of Lost Atlantis; about the Sons of Will and Yoga and the Ring Pass-not; about the Great Day Be-with-us, when all shall be perfected into one, re-uniting 'thyself and others, myself and thee.'

So the half-hour passed, and I went downstairs to see the Old Lady. She was in her writing-room, just rising from her desk, and clad in one of those dark blue dressing-gowns she loved. My first impressions was her rippled hair as she turned, then her marvelously potent eyes, as she welcomed me: "My dear fellow! I am so glad to see you! Come in and talk! You are just in time to have some tea!" And a hearty handshake.

Then a piercing call for "Louise;" and her Swiss maid appeared, to receive a voluble torrent of directions in French, and H. P. B. settled herself snugly into an armchair, comfortably near her tobacco-box, and began to make me a cigarette. The cuffs of a Jaeger suit showed round her wrists, only setting off the perfect shape and delicacy of her hands, as her deft fingers, deeply stained with nicotine, twisted the white rice-paper of Turkish tobacco. When we were comfortably alight, she told me a charming tale of Louise's devotion. She had got away from her base of supplies somewhere, in Belgium I think, and things were rather tight for awhile. A wealthy gentleman called to see the famous Russian witch, and tipped her maid munificently. As soon as he was gone, Louise appeared, blushing and apologising: "Perhaps madam will not be offended," she stammered; "but I do not need money; *enfin—madame consentira—*" and she tried to transfer the douceur to her mistress.

Louise's entry cut short the story, and H. P. B. turned with a quizzically humorous smile to another theme: "Of course you have read the S. P. R. Report?—The Spookical Research Society,—and know that I am a Russian spy, and the champion imposter of the age?"

"Yes, I read the Report. But I knew its contents already. I was at the meeting when it was first read, two years ago."

"Well," said H. P. B., again smiling with infinite humor; "and what impression did the frisky lambkin from Australia make upon your susceptible heart?"

"A very deep one. I decided that he must be a very good young man, who always came home to tea; and that the Lord had given him a very good conceit of himself. If he got an opinion into

his head, he would plow away blandly, and contrary facts would be quite invisible. But your case was not the first on the list. They had a paper on modern witchcraft, at which another of your accusers proved that pinches and burns could be sent by thought-transference to a person miles away. It was quite grewsome, and suggested ducking-stools. Then you came on. But as far as I could see, the young Colonial had never really investigated any occult phenomena at all; he simply investigated dim and confused memories about them in the minds of indifferent witnesses. And all that Mr. Sinnett says in the Occult World seems to me absolutely unshaken by the whole Report. The Poet, the third of your accusers, came down among us after the meeting, and smilingly asked me what I thought of it. I answered that it was the most unfair and one-sided thing I had ever heard of, and that if I had not already been a member of your Society, I should have joined on the strength of that attack. He smiled a kind of sickly smile, and passed on."

"I am glad you think so, my dear," she answered in her courtly way; "for now I can offer you some tea with a good conscience." Louise had laid a white cloth on the corner table, brought in a tray, and lit the lamp. The secretary soon joined us, receiving a tart little sermon on being unpunctual, which he was not. Then we came back to her friends the Psychical Researchers.

"They will never do much," said H. P. B. "They go too much on material lines, and they are far too timid. That was the secret motive that turned them against me. The young Colonial went astray, and then the bell-wethers of the flock followed in his wake, because they were afraid of raising a storm if they said our phenomena were true. Fancy what it would have meant! Why it would practically have committed Modern Science to our Mahatmas and all I have taught about the inhabitants of the occult world and their tremendous powers. They shrank at the thought of it, and so they made a scapegoat of this poor orphan and exile." And her eyes were full of humorous pity for herself.

"It must have been something like that," I answered; "for there is simply no backbone in the Report itself. It is the weakest thing of the kind I have ever read. There is not a shred of real evidence in it from beginning to end."

"Do you really think so? That's right!" cried H. P. B.; and then she turned on her secretary, and poured in a broadside of censure, telling him he was greedy, idle, untidy, unmethodical, and generally worthless. When he ventured an uneasy defence, she flared up and declared that he "was born a flapdoodle, lived a flap-

doodle, and would die a flapdoodle." He lost his grip, and not unnaturally made a yellow streak of egg across her white table-cloth.

"There!" cried H. P. B., glaring at him with withering scorn, and then turning to me for sympathy in her afflictions. That was her way, to rate her disciples in the presence of perfect strangers. It speaks volumes for her, that they loved her still.

I tried to draw a red herring across the track,—not that there were any on the table. We were limited to tea, toast and eggs.

"The funny thing about the Psychical Researchers," I said, "is that they have proved for themselves that most of these magical powers are just what you say they are, and they seem to have bodily adopted, not to say, stolen, your teaching of the Astral Light. Take the thing that has been most made fun of: the journeys of adepts and their pupils in the astral body; you know how severe they are about poor Damodar and his journeys in his astral body from one part of India to another, and even from India over to London. Well, they themselves have perfectly sound evidence of the very same thing. I know one of their Committee, a professor of physics, who really discovered thought-transference and made all the first experiments in it. Well, he showed me a number of their unpublished papers, and among them was an account of just such astral journeys made quite consciously. I think the astral traveler was a young doctor, but that is a detail. The point is, that he kept a diary of his visits, and a note of them was also kept by the person he visited, and the two perfectly coincide. They have the whole thing perfectly authenticated and in print, and yet when you make them very same claim, they call you a fraud. I wonder why?"

"Partly British prejudice," she answered; "no Englishman ever believes any good of a Russian. They think we are all liars. You know they shadowed me for months in India, as a Russian spy? I don't understand," she went on meditatively, yet with a severe eye on her secretary, "I don't understand how these Englishmen can be so very sure of their superiority, and at the same time in such terror of our invading India."

"We could easily hold our own if you did, H. P. B.," ventured the patriotic secretary, pulling himself together, but evidently shaky yet, and avoiding her eye. She was down on him in an instant:

"Why!" she cried, "what could you do with your poor little army? I tell you, my dear, when the Russians do meet the English on the Afghan frontier, we shall crush you like fleas!"

I never saw anything so overwhelming. She rose up in her wrath like the whole Russian army of five millions on a war footing,

and descended on the poor Briton's devoted head, with terrific weight. When she was roused H. P. B. was like a torrent; she simply dominated everyone who came near her; and her immense personal force made itself felt always, even when she was sick and suffering, and with every reason to be cast down. I have never seen anything like her tremendous individual power. She was the justification of her own teaching of the divinity of the will. "But H. P. B."—hesitated the secretary. But she crushed him with a glance, and he desperately helped himself to more buttered toast only to be accused of gluttony.

Again I attempted a diversion: "There is one thing about the S. P. R. Report I want you to explain. What about the writing in the occult letters?"

"Well what about it?" asked H. P. B., immediately interested.

"They say that you wrote them yourself, and that they bear evident marks of your handwriting and style. What do you say to that?"

"Let me explain it this way;" she answered, after a long gaze at the end of her cigarette. "Have you ever made experiments in thought-transference? If you have, you must have noticed that the person who receives the mental picture very often colors it, or even changes it slightly, with his own thought, and this where perfectly genuine transference of thought takes place."

(*To be continued.*)

GIVE UNTO ME THY PEACE!

Through the days of my life have I sought Thee.

In the dewy morning, sweet with song of birds; at the heat of noon-day; in the twilight of evening; in the silence of the midnight hour; in the chill of dawn have I laid bare my heart to Thee in silent communion.

In the ancient days I knew Thee,

Thou beloved Friend and Guide!

I walked with Thee and spoke Thy tongue, and breathed the celestial air of Thy Life.

Anon, the darkness of the lower worlds fell upon me, and Thou wert lost to my outer vision. And though with outward senses I saw and knew Thee no more, nor heard Thy words of Love and Wisdom, yet did I not despair. Knowing what Thou art, my faith was in Thee. And never through all time wilt Thou desert me.

I have trusted in Thy Love, abided by Thine ancient promise that in the days to come when, remembering Thee in my heart I should call upon Thy Names, my voice would have power to reach Thee, and Thou wouldst call me to Thy side once more to walk the clean ways trod by Thy white feet; once more to live in purity with Thee, to share Thy celestial joys, partaker in Thy divine, immortal life. Now are come the days of my remembrance; when, aroused from the dark dreams of forgetfulness, I see Thy light like some star aflame in the heavens at the hour preceding the dawn; herald and messenger of the Sun of Light that is to come.

In reverence, in love, in humility, O Giver of Light and Life, I kneel to Thee. Take Thou my life and give me of Thy Light! For I perish without Thee in the nether darkness. And when I feel Thee not then is confusion and death in my soul.

For Lord Thou art of my life, Ruler over my destiny, Bestower of all gifts.

Thou hast guided my footsteps from the ancient days; but in mine ignorance and folly too often have I wandered from the Path; with proud heart defied Thee; in my ingratitude rebelled against Thee.

Yet knowest Thou that I am Thine.

Divine is Thy Love, infinite Thy Compassion; and, while my heart is true to Thee, neither waywardness, forgetfulness, nor my ingratitude can weigh with Thee more than feather's weight against me.

Shall I bewail my sins and cry Thy pardon, O Lord of Love and Mercy? Nay, Thou need'st it not. For Thine understanding is perfect and Thy forgiveness without measure. My faintest cry for help reaches Thy hearing; and even my longing for Thee quickly brings Thee to my side.

O Compassionate One, would that I were wholly Thine! that the maya of the lower self would lose its power to come between us, dimming Thy Light, and blurring the reflection of Thy gracious Image!

Yet will I have patience, knowing Thy Power; will I have faith, remembering Thy Promise; will I have endurance, assured of Thy Help.

And at last will I know and walk with Thee forevermore.

Even now I know Thou art with me.

As in the days of yore I hear Thy silent voice, I feel Thy protecting care, Thy tender guidance, and in the warmth of Thy Compassionate Love my heart softens and expands with longing for all men and all creatures. For they are Thine! And that which is Thine shall likewise become mine. Because once again, Thou art revealed to me my heart burns with love for Thee. And by this love and Thy gracious help shall I grow in power to do Thy work, and thereby serve and help mankind.

Give unto me and them Thy Peace O Lord of Compassionate Wisdom.

ŒDIPE.

ORIENTAL DEPARTMENT.

SONGS OF THE MASTER: IV.

The secret of Life is whispered for ever in our ears, summoning us to enter the hall of everlasting youth, bidding us unbar the door of our present divinity, pointing the path of unconquerable power, revealing to mortal man the secret of man the immortal. We are challenged to make true for ourselves the dreams we have dreamed of God.

There is a newborn hope in the message of the unseen as it comes to us. We have passed out of the shadow into the sunshine. The clouds that hung so long about the door have lifted. The burden of the world's anguish has melted away. Since the Cross first threw its black shadow along the earth, the promise of immortal life was held forth to those only who turned back in bitterness from the world, whose garb was sackcloth, their best hope despair. Their master was the Man of Sorrows. Their password was Renunciation. But we have left behind us the old evangel of pain. Our new watchword is Victory. Our Genius is the lord of Joy. We are to renounce no longer but to conquer: to overcome the world not by flight but by possession. No longer exiles but victors shall knock at the immortal doors.

The genius of our age has drawn very near to the secret. We have merged all ideals in one: to conquer, to be strong. Power and valor are our divinities. We no longer worship wealth but the will that wins it. Our one goal is the sense of success, and we see nothing but the goal. Even death we have almost forgotten, transforming the old king of terrors into a gentle and not unwelcome shadow. Nothing is remembered but the lust of strength. One step forward will change it to the lust of immortality.

For a little experience of life is enough to teach us that in sensual success we miss our ideal. The sense of power slips past us into our works, leaving us poor and empty-handed. When in the very glow of victory we see the tinsel glitter fade, we are at the threshold of the unseen world; we are ready to understand that we were better than our goal, that we were born to more lasting triumphs. The time has come for us to claim our divinity. In the midst of our success, the finger of the hidden immortal touches us, and we are called forth from the arena of the world, to hear the whispered secret of our inheritance. The glamor of sensual life has fallen from our eyes, and we are ready to lift the black veil of death.

When we draw back from life and sensual success, as something very good, yet not good enough to satisfy our heart's desire, we come to a lull of quiet loneliness, a hush of silence in the dark. In that solitude and gloom we may catch the vision of the truer way, and surprise the world-old secret of human life. Hitherto we have lived believing ourselves closed in by the visible world, buried in the heart of sensual life, and held there firmly by our bodily fate. But we begin to divine that we are really set firm in the immortal world, leaning forward into sensual life from the life above it, never losing our firm foundation there. In the midst of death we are in life.

Thus our destinies are passed between two worlds: the world of desire and death, and the world of will and immortality. When we learn to live from the will as we tried to live from sensual desires, we shall be already immortal, and enter living an immortal world. Therefore our worship of will brings us near to the portal of peace.

This is the secret that shadows itself forth in the stillness and darkness. Soon will follow clearer vision that we have drawn our life from the world of the immortal, day by day since the beginning. But this simplest of all secrets was hidden from us by the seething of our desires. We and all creatures enter every day into the immortal world, though we know it not. Nor shall we remember, until the hush of stillness comes upon us when we draw back victorious yet disappointed from our battle with the material world. Not till we have renounced can our eyes open.

Every day we wage our warfare with the world. Every night, when the throb of desire and the whirl of the senses grow still, we sink, as we call it, to sleep. We might more truly say we arise to our awakening. The shadows of our desires hover awhile around us, haunting us as we linger in the borderland of dreams. As our desires were, so are our dreams: things fair or hideous, grim or radiant with lovely light. But dreams soon fade and desires cease, and we enter into our rest. We pass from the world of the senses to the realm of immortal will. We enter in through the golden portal, far better than the fabled gates of ivory or horn, and for awhile we are immortal in power, immortal in peace. For without power, there is no peace.

Beyond the land of dreams and the shadows of desire stands the gate of peace. All men enter there and all creatures. Were it not so, all men must go mad. And within that portal all are equal. All alike awake to their immortal selves. Sinner and saint have left their difference at the threshold. They enter in together as pure living souls. Weak and strong are one there, high and lowly

are one. The immortal sunshine, the living water, are for all. For great Life has wrapt us round with beneficence, so that even now we are in the midst of the everlasting.

Thus we all enter the power beyond the veil of dreams. We all draw our lives alike from the sea of life. In the radiance we are all one, wrapt in the terrible flame of Life. Yet we forget. We come back again shivering across the threshold, and hasten to wrap our pure divinity in a mist of dreams. The saint once more takes his white garment: the sinner, his red vesture of desire. The weak is weak again, and the strong exults. Their dreams are once more real to them; and these dreams are the world of our mortality.

We return to the world of daylight to live for a few more hours in the strength brought back from the immortal world. Our earthen lamps are replenished for another watch. We strain and stagger under the burden of our dreams, driven by hope and fear, by desire and hate. Fear is the fiercest scourge of all; making us cowards, it makes us also cruel. Thus we fall away from our divinity, robbed of every shred of memory by the army of shadows that meet us on the threshold, with their captain, fear. Yet in all our phantom-world, there is no illusion so absolute a lie as fear. We are the gods, the immortals; yet we cower and cringe. We are children of the will, yet slaves of fear. Therefore our ideal of valor brings us near the threshold, for it bids us kill the captain of the shadows who bar our way. But for a long time yet, the shadow of fear will lurk in the haunted darkness of our human hearts.

Another day ends, and our tide ebbs. The storm of our desires has worn us out, and overcome with weariness, we sink to rest, we rise to power. And all our prayer and aspiration, all the fervor of our faith has no aim but this: to reach awake the sea of power we bathe in, while asleep. Therefore we close our eyes in aspiration, seeking once again the light behind the veil. So great is the beneficience of sleep, so mighty a benison is ever near to us. We enter perpetually, but we always forget. Our power slips from us as we return through the cloud-zone of dreamland. Round every pillow gather thick the terrors and pains of life, not less than its ambitions and its hopes, instantly invading us as we come back to waking.

Therefore we gain this clew to the secret. The door of our immortality is open to us day by day. But we are so ridden with dreams that our immortal inheritance brings us no profit. Therefore we must elude the army of dreams. We must bring back to the light of day the present sense of our divinity which illumined

us in dreamlessness. A thing so simple as that is the open door of our salvation. Our Genius bids us gather power and conquer fear. And fear once mastered, we may begin to disband the army of dreams, the ghosts that haunt our borderland and make us forget. The diminished army on the frontier is no longer strong enough to keep us from smuggling through with us something of our dreamless vision, some memory of the immortal world. We glean these memories day by day, in the silence of the morning, in the first hush of waking, as we bring back into every morning something of the freshness of everlasting youth.

At first, what we carry back with us will seem more dream-like than dreams. Yet dreams have their power, as we should know, whose whole lives are guided by dreams. First a dream-memory only: a haunting shimmer of other worlds; a secret freshness and gladness, coming we know not whence. Yet a vision so full of unearthly fascination and allurement that we would follow it rather than the solidest reality of day. Thus far all the poets have reached. This is the secret of their inspiration. They are haunted by the dreamless dream; it lingers in beauty over all their works. Even the faint memory of this vision is brightness enough to illumine hearts throughout all the world.

Yet poets and the devout do not hold all the secret. They are still in the grayness of the morning. We are heirs to the full glory of the noonday sun. With fidelity and strong will we are to make real the fragments of our remembered dream, imposing them upon the shadows of the day, and in their light transforming all our world. The seers and poets fail, because they do not rest in will. The vision bursts from their hearts in a rapture of song and prayer, leaving their wills unenkindled. We are the richer, but they are poorer. They should have sealed their lips, guarding the vision in their hearts till they had wrought it into the fabric of their lives.

The highest valor is needed, to make our vision real. We must battle with the whole army of shadows, the princes and powers of the air. We must fight to the death, if we would inherit life. As the fight is waged with dauntless courage, we are ever more penetrated with the piercing intuition that our waking world is the real dream; the true waking is elsewhere, a better reality than this. Thus we begin to remember. Thus far the sages go. Their message is full of whispers that our life is a dream. But they do not go far enough. They should pass on dauntless to the other shore, to the real world of their immortality. It lies about us in sleep. It is not far from us in our waking.

Thus we gather the fruits that drift to us in the dawn from the other shore. There will come a time when that world begins to outshine this. Then we shall be ready for undimmed illumination. We shall really launch our boat upon the waves. Rapt from our mortal bodies into paradise, we shall hear words not lawful for our mortal lips to utter, for the only lips that can tell of them are already immortal. No longer dimly overshadowed by the Soul, we enter through the silence into the very being of the Soul itself. We know with awe that we have inherited our immortality. We have found our treasure. With undimmed and boundless vision, we behold the shining ocean of life. The radiance and the realm are ours. We are filled full of infinite power, infinite peace.

"REINCARNATION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT."

[By *James M. Pryse*. Page & Co., New York.]

I have just finished reading Mr. Pryse's new book and the pleasure it gave me is still fresh in me. Though a book it should not be called, as both its literary form and the number of its pages are those of an essay rather than a book.

A book, written on so serious a subject as reincarnation—and in the New Testament too—, prepares the reader to expect something solid and exhaustive, something ponderous.

Now, Mr. Pryse's talent never is that: it never is ponderous.

A witty friend of ours once made the remark, that reading Carlyle's account of the French Revolution was like studying history by lightning flashes. The same saying can be applied, with still better justice, to Mr. Pryse's writings. Evenness of tenour is not their strong point.

"Reincarnation in the New Testament" has all the good qualities and all the defects we have always found in the works of the same author. It is highly suggestive. It gives the readers the desire to open once more their long neglected Bibles, to look up the quotations, to compare, to think, to draw conclusions. Yet a truly exacting scholarship would never be wholly satisfied with Mr. Pryse's rendering of the Greek original. This is a defect, yet a defect, I personally overlook easily and readily, on the grounds that too much academical learning makes a man shy of his own originality and generally ends by killing his inspiration. Only to think of the endless rows upon rows of theological books in any well furnished library. They are wonderfully accurate in their information, their scholar-

ship, like Caesar's wife, is above suspicion—yet how uninteresting they all are, how dull, how useless.

This is certainly not the fate we should wish for our friends the "Sermon on the Mount" and the "Reincarnation in the New Testament."

Our really serious quarrel with their author is that in them the line between that what is proved and that which it would be a good thing to prove is not drawn distinctly enough. Yet the most brilliant and likely conjecture is not the same as a proven fact, and Mr. Pryse ought to know it.

On page 66 Mr. Pryse says: "Without answering the question directly whether the man's blindness was due to heredity or to his own sins in *a past* life, Jesus gave out the broader teaching that all sin and suffering are disciplinary, etc., etc."

This broader teaching Jesus certainly did give out, but neither in the four Gospels as we have read them in several languages, nor in Mr. Pryse's preceding argument is there anything to show that Jesus really meant *a past* life of the blind man and not merely his past life, that is the twenty, or thirty, or forty years since his baby form left his mother's womb.

Again on page 63 Mr. Pryse says: "The words 'beneath the fig tree' may be taken to mean, 'before you were born'; the symbolism is that of the ripe fruit concealed beneath the leaf, coupled with this the statement about the Angels (Souls) 'going up and coming down' is extremely significant". I can not but feel sorry that Mr. Pryse said *is extremely significant* instead of *would be extremely significant*. It certainly would be so, but there is nothing whatever to show that it is so, in the passage of John's gospel Mr. Pryse quotes. Mr. Pryse refers the reader to Gen. iii, 7. I did look up the passage in the Genesis, but, with the best will in the world, could not find in it anything to convince me that Jesus did not know the difference between standing under a fig tree and being concealed behind a leaf. Neither can I see why Mr. Pryse should bracket the word *Souls* after the word *Angels* in the passage I have copied above. I can not help thinking that souls either incarnated or disincarnated have nothing to do with it, that Jesus actually meant angels, messengers between God and man, continually descending, hence forward, on the Son of Man, in a way visible to the eye of a seer.

It is not enough to wish that a thing should be this or that way to actually make it so. Yet, in his eager and perfectly disinterested,

therefore highly creditable, desire that reincarnation should be taught in the New Testament, Mr. Pryse fails to see that, however regretable, it is not so. In his concluding chapter, he says: "That reincarnation, not only in the case of particular men, but also as a law of life that applies to all men, is distinctly taught in he New Testament, has been shown."

Perhaps, it is. But it certainly has not been shown to me. As I said before, Mr. Pryse's little volume gave me great pleasure—also profit, in ways I shall mention further—, but after reading it, I still think, as I did before, that all that can be justly said on the subject is that reincarnation is *not* disputed in the New Testament, that in the utterances of Jesus there is nothing to oppose it. We even may venture so far as to say, that reincarnation is referred to in many instances, in the New Testament, but invariably in a more or less covert and cautious way.

That is all. And that is certainly not the same as openly and distinctly taught. Possibly, it would more conform with facts, if we said, that the New Testament teaches a system of Avatars, that is the periodical reappearance of divinity, of the breath of God on earth. Adam, David and Jesus, Elijah and John the Baptist, being instances of it. But even in this case the expression "distinctly taught" would be far too strong.

The most open minded, cautious and reliable of orientalists, Theodore Goldstücker, says on the subject:

"Among the early Christians, St. Jerome relates, the doctrine of transmigration was taught as a traditional and esoteric one, which was only communicated to a selected few; and Origenes, like the Kabbalists, considers it as the only means of explaining some biblical traditions, as that of the struggle of Jacob and Esau before their birth, or the selection of Jeremiah when he was not yet born, and many more events, which would throw discredit on divine justice, unless they were justified by good or bad acts done in a former life. of Christian sects, the Manichaeans especially adhered to this belief, but the church always rejected it as a heresy."

It is not only probable, but it is evident that Jesus knew the teachings of reincarnation and often spoke of it, in a covert way, to his direct pupils, but neither he nor his immediate followers have taught it openly and decidedly. After reading Mr. Pryse's book I am not any further advanced than I was before, simply by having studied Theodore Goldstücker's essay on transmigration.

No, Mr. Pryse has not shown that reincarnation was taught in the New Testament. And so much the better, because to show this would be to show something that was not.

But what Mr. Pryse has shown—and that above any doubt—is that to know anything of the Gospels or the Epistles, the whole Bible or the whole life of man, one has to consider them in the light of reincarnation. Otherwise the sacredest of sacred writings and the most complete of human lives would be nothing but a collection of pompous prophecies, which never came to be true, of grandiloquent sayings which signify nothing, an unsolved and unsolvable enigma.

This, Mr. Pryse has certainly shown. He also has shown that the utterances of the Bible can yield newer and more complete meaning than the one familiar to us. And for this our sincerest gratitude is due to the author of the "Sermon on the Mount" and the "Reincarnation in the New Testament."

Mr. Pryse's exposition and style, in his last little volume, are all we are accustomed to expect from his pen. The opening chapter is positively brilliant. As to the last one, it does not strike us as an apposite summing up of what was said before, but as an extremely interesting rough sketch, which it would be a good thing to work into a complete book of perhaps two hundred pages and more. A few more words, before I sign my name. Mr. Pryse's translations of the Greek original have been objected to in our hearing, on the grounds of their lacking the beauty of the accepted English version. From the point of view of literary style, severe yet magnificent, the English Bible certainly is the most perfect treasure the English language possesses.

I can quite understand that for the lovers of perfect language it must be quite an unpleasant shock to meet John the *Lustrator* (p. 4) instead the *Baptist* and *Gnosis* (p. 69) instead of *understanding*. Still more—I would be outrageously grieved myself were the word "Baptist" to be replaced by the word "Sprinkler". Yet *lustrare* does mean *to sprinkle* in Latin, and it is as good a word as any.

Such is the force of habit.

Yet we all know that the most familiar objects, pictures in our rooms, for instance, give new effects and look new, when we change their habitual places. Likewise, the utterances of the Bible, when clad in new apposite words, are sure to yield a new meaning and pour enlightenment into our hearts we have never received from them as yet.

And in view of this possibility, we must overlook an unhappily chosen word here and there in the new translations. In fact, we can afford to face all the "lustrators" and the "sprinklers" in the world, if they are to be the means of giving as a new impulse for investigation, thought and self-examination.

And this impulse Mr. Pryse's new book certainly does give us.

VERA JOHNSTON.

THE NEW CYCLE.

The present cycle, a period of seventy-five years, beginning with the present year, is to be a time of assimilation—assimilation by humanity at large of Theosophical truths. The Lodge has given sufficient teaching to last until their next direct and public effort, and we now have to work on that material, making it our own and giving it out for the welfare of all. This we must do of our own motion if we are going to do it at all, "by self-induced and self-devised efforts." We cannot make it our own unless we try at the same time to give it expression in thought, word, and deed.

But we shall no longer be urged, entreated, pleaded with, and incited to make Theosophy our Ideal. The time for persuasion is past. If we cannot work without constant stimulus, we can be idle. The only stimulus we shall get is that which we shall receive, through our own efforts, from our higher nature. If we are too lethargic to reach our higher nature we may take root and return to the vegetable kingdom from which we prematurely emerged. If we need constant excitement and novelty to encourage us to work we shall not find it in this movement. We may try elsewhere. If our interest depends on immediate, visible results, or the plaudits of others, our interest is doomed. If we find the pleasures of the world —refined or coarse, it matters not—more to our liking than the development of our own natures, than the helping of others to come to themselves, no one will ask us to turn away from that which we find so attractive. If the details of our business, social, and domestic lives are so absorbing that we have neither time nor thought for the Soul, no one will seek to free us from our slavery. If we expect a few workers to tickle our mental palates with papers at meetings, while we graciously look on, languidly listen and do nothing, we shall be disappointed. If we think that magazines, paid for by someone else, will be provided for our kind acceptance, we are mistaken. What we get we shall have to *earn* and give its equivalent in

time, money, or work. If we are unwilling to give up bodily luxuries for Soul necessities, then our Souls will have to starve.

The new cycle is the cycle of individual work, of applied Theosophy. It demands SELF-moved men and women; puppets are not required. *J. Z.* in *The English Theosophist.*

NOTES AND REVIEWS.

Business first, pleasure after.

Before I give myself a refreshing plunge into *our own* theosophical literature of the month, I must state—though I do not like to do so—that hundreds of copies of the "Forum"—*our own* "Theosophical Forum" I mean, for it appears there is another "Forum" older and much wealthier than ours, yet not half as good—have been regularly given away for nothing for the last two years. Yet the printers' bills, the addressing bills, etc., come in all the same, and have to be paid. If the true esoteric purport of this remark is taken by our readers in the right spirit, it is quite on the cards, that when next the printing bills, the addressing bills, etc., do come in, the "Forum" will be able to meet them with a serene smile on its careworn face, and our honorary readers will become entitled to the new volume.

***

Let us give honor to whom honor is due. The first place, in this number of the "Forum" is given to an article entitled "Helena Petrovna Blavatsky." And that is certainly as it should be. How vividly its opening lines have carried us back to our own first impressions of London, of H. P. B., of the theosophical doings and goings on, of these already remote times. So much is changed since then, we have lost so much and still more we have gained. Yet the tasks before us are still the same: we must open our eyes and see ourselves and the world not as we should like to see or are accustomed to see, but as we and the world really are. For that was the true message of H. P. B. The most interesting part of this article is held over for our new number.

***

We hear so often that matters discussed for the last five or six years, in the "Oriental Department", pass far above people's heads. This may be so or it may not, but one thing is sure: passing above people's heads is not synonymous with being unprofitable. For if

we do give the matter an honest consideration, most things, that are of true and even vital importance, do pass above our heads. Yet the world's life is and always has been influenced only by this class and no other class of things.

There was an old lady once, who, when asked what impressed her the most in a preacher's sermon, answered: "That sweet word Mesopotamia". It kept revolving in her mind, exercising her imagination, possibly her highest aspirations, yet she certainly did not know what the "sweet word" meant.

Lead, kindly Light.

***

We can not help wondering how is it that Mr. James M. Pryse did not pay sufficient attention to the following passage in the eighth chapter of St. John's Gospel:

"Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad. Then said the Jews unto him: Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them: Verily, verily I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am."

And yet another to shed light on it:

"And Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bore to him, Isaac." Gen. 21:3. (B. C. 1898.)

And still more light: The dictionary of Scripture proper names gives us the following information: Isaac—laughter, sporting,—otherwise rejoicing.

The three together might be taken to mean that Isaac was one of the incarnations of that spiritual part of Jesus, which "is before Abraham was born", and over which so far as one can judge, all the covenants between God and man are made to this day.

***

The Booksellers complain that the author's course, in selling "The Memory of Past Births" at reduced prices, makes it impossible for them to handle the book profitably, and are inclined to drop it from their lists. This, needless to say, would act very unfavorably on this and all future works of the same class and from the same source, and thus defeat the very object which the author had in view in selling it so cheap. This object, as it stands to reason, being—the largest possible distribution of the ideas they contain. Therefore it would be both right and expedient for the author to conform to the trade prices from the present date, and he has consequently fixed the prices at 25 cents for a single copy of "The

Memory of the Past Births"; $1.25 for six copies; a copy bound in cloth, 50 cents.

A quarter on six copies surely is not as heavy an increase of what the price was formerly as to prevent the spread of the book by all those who truly hold the ideas therein true and important.

***

We have our usual monthly harvest of theosophical periodicals. We regret that space and time do not allow us to go into their discussion as we should like to. Yet we must mention "Æ's" poem in the "Lamp" and the lines that struck us the most in it.

"Still above the waters brooding, spirit, in thy timeless quest!
"Was the glory of thine image trembling over east and west,
"Not divine enough, when mirrored in the morning water's breast?"

***

Also we must mark the fact, that Dr. Franz Hartmann, with his usual luck, has apparently discovered no less a person than the *perfect woman,*—for otherwise what signifies the following passage from the "Letter-Box" of the March "Lotus-blüthen":

"My view of the woman's movement is, that though it is highly necessary to lift the woman to the intellectual level of the man, it is still more necessary to lift the man to the spiritual level of the woman."

For our own part we must confess, that though we have often enough met women who intellectually could compete with any man, as man goes, we have seen little spiritually amongst them, in any country or continent. The enormous failing of modern women most assuredly is the great materiality of her tastes and even her aspirations. In that respect she is a drag on man, who, though having a better sense of the true value of things, has not half her motive power.

***

As to our other German comrade the "Theosophisher Wegweiser", we think so highly of his tactful and apposite idea of giving almost a whole number to Giordano Bruno on the 300th anniversary of his death, that we shall try and find somebody amongst ourselves who understands German and can write English to rearrange the same article for our own "Forum".

BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS.

The Secret Doctrine, (Vols. I, II and Index), *H. P. Blavatsky*,	$12.50
Key to Theosophy, *H. P. Blavatsky*	2.00
The Voice of the Silence, *H. P. Blavatsky*, cloth 50 cents; leather	.75
Studies in Occultism, *H. P. Blavatsky*, (6 Vols. at 35 cents)	1.50
The Ocean of Theosophy, *W. Q. Judge*, paper 25 cents; cloth	.50
Bhagavad Gita, compiled by *W. Q. Judge*, leather	.75
Patanjali's Yoga Aphorisms, trs. by *W. Q. Judge*, morocco	1.00
Echoes from the Orient, *W. Q. Judge*	.50
Mystic Masonry, *J. D. Buck*	1.50
The Theosophy of the Upanishads	1.00
The Idyll of the White Lotus, *M. C.*, paper 50 cents; cloth	1.25
Light on the Path, (with notes), *M. C.*	.40
Esoteric Buddhism, *A. P. Sinnett*, paper 50 cents; cloth	1.25
The Growth of the Soul, *A. P. Sinnett*	1.50
Reincarnation, *E. D. Walker*, paper 50 cents; cloth	1.25
The Light of Asia, *Sir Edwin Arnold*, paper 25 cents; cloth	1.00
Lectures on the Bhagavad Gita, *T. Subba Row*	.75
Life's Questions, *Ernest Temple*	1.00
Civilization, its Cause and Cure, *Ed. Carpenter*	1.00
Reincarnation in the New Testament, *James M. Pryse*, paper 25 cents; cloth	.50
The Theosophical Forum, per copy .10, per annum	1.00
Astral Bodies, *H. P. Blavatsky*	.10
Psychic and Noetic Action, *H. P. Blavatsky*	.10
Epitome of Theosophical Teachings. *W. Q Judge*	.10
Culture of Concentration, *W. Q. Judge*	.10
Astral Intoxication, *W. Q. Judge*	.10
The Purposes of Soul, *Jasper Niemand*, (*J. W. C. Keightley*)	.10
The Sleeping Spheres, *Jasper Niemand*	.15
Tao-teh-King, ("The Book of the Path of Virtue")	.25
Priest and People (Some Modern Failings), *Che-Yew-Tsang.*	.10
Brotherhood, *E. T. Hargrove*	.05
Short Glossary of Theosophical Terms	.05
The Necessity for Reincarnation, a tract, 2c. each or 100 for	1.50

The above and any other Theosophical books, pamphlets, and magazines can be obtained by mailing the prices quoted to :—

THE W. Q. JUDGE PUBLISHING CO.

P. O. Box 1584,
New York, N. Y.

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IN AMERICA.

FOUNDED BY H. P. BLAVATSKY AT NEW YORK IN 1875.

Its objects are:

1st. The formation of a nucleus of universal brotherhood without distinctions of race, creed, sex, caste or color.

2d. The study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies and sciences.

3d. The investigation of the unexplained laws of nature and the psychic powers latent in man.

The Society does not pretend to be able to establish at once a universal brotherhood among men, but only strives to create the nucleus of such a body. Many of its members believe that an acquaintance with the world's religions and philosophies will reveal, as the common and fundamental principle underlying these, that "spiritual identity of all Souls with the Oversoul" which is the basis of true brotherhood; and many of them also believe that an appreciation of the finer forces of nature and man will still further emphasize the same idea.

The organization is wholly unsectarian, with no creed, dogma or personal authority to enforce or impose; neither is it to be held responsible for the opinions of its members, who are expected to accord to the beliefs of others that tolerance which they demand for their own.

The following proclamation was adopted at the Convention of the Society held at Boston, April, 1895:

"The Theosophical Society in America by its delegates and members in Convention assembled, does hereby proclaim fraternal good will and kindly feeling towards all students of Theosophy and members of Theosophical Societies wherever and however situated. It further proclaims and avers its hearty sympathy and association with such persons and organizations in all theosophical matters except those of government and administration, and invites their correspondence and co-operation.

"To all men and women of whatever caste, creed, race or religious belief, who aim at the fostering of peace, gentleness and unselfish regard one for another, and the acquisition of such knowledge of men and nature as shall tend to the elevation and advancement of the human race, it sends most friendly greeting and freely proffers its services.

"It joins hands with all religions and religious bodies whose efforts are directed to the purification of men's thoughts and the bettering of their ways, and it avows its harmony therewith. To all scientific societies and individual searchers after wisdom upon whatever plane and by whatever righteous means pursued, it is and will be grateful for such discovery and unfoldment of Truth as shall serve to announce and confirm *a scientific basis for ethics*.

"And lastly, it invites to its membership those who, seeking a higher life hereafter, would learn to know the *Path* they tread in this."

Applications for membership should be addressed to the President, Dr. J. D. Buck, 116 W. 7th Street, Cincinnati, Ohio. Admission fee, $1.00. Annual dues, including subscription to THE THEOSOPHICAL FORUM, $2.00. Theosophical literature can be obtained from the W. Q. Judge Publishing Co., P. O. Box 1584, New York, N. Y.

THE THEOSOPHICAL FORUM.

The Society is not responsible for any statements therein unless contained in an official document. Questions, answers to questions, opinions and notes on Theosophical subjects are invited.

Subscriptions $1.00 per annum. Single copies 10 cents.

All communications should be addressed, THE THEOSOPHICAL FORUM, P. O. Box 1584. New York.

GTU Library
3 2400 00268 5190

THREE DAY
v.5
1899/
1900
452497
Theosophical Forum
v.5
1899/1900
Graduate Theological Union
Library
2400 Ridge Road
Berkeley, CA 94709
DEMCO